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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study was to report the value that teachers in small schools placed on employee benefits. The Employee Benefits Questionnaire, an attitude measuring instrument, was sent to 266 teachers representing 19% of the school districts in New Mexico. From the 79.9% response, respondents were found to be about 59% tenured, 34% male, and approximately 50% elementary teachers. The results indicated that of the 51 items included in the questionnaire, 11 were ranked 3 or more rankings apart. It was further indicated that the differences which existed between tenured and non-tenured, male and female, and elementary and secondary teachers were so small that the groups seemed to be homogeneous. The top 3 benefits, as evidenced by teacher response to this questionnaire, were freedom to determine teaching methods, small student-teacher ratio, and accumulative sick leave. (HBC)

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Valuing Employee Benefits by Teachers of Small Schools[1]

by

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[1972]

Business and industry have considered employee benefits as an important factor in the recruitment and retention of employees for almost thirty years. Yet only in the last decade have educational organizations placed any emphasis on the benefit program as a major component of employee compensation.

Common to most benefit programs in education is the provision for certain basic needs. Beyond this, the type and scope of benefits provided are a matter of the uniqueness of the particular organization and the knowledge and ability of those persons responsible for its development.

Administrators and representatives of teacher associations are the primary determinants of the benefits package within the educational structure. If the benefits program is to effectively serve the goals of their organizations, the decision-making process must reflect the desires of teachers. The purpose of this article is to report the value that teachers in small schools place on employee benefits.

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[1]Note, this is the first of a five part series on employee benefits. The others will be reports on the Albuqerque, intermediate, large schools and a comparison of the different sizes of school districts.

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Methods

Of the eighty nine school districts in New Mexico, sixty two have 116 teachers or less.[2] For the purpose of this article they have been classified as small. The sixty two school districts have nineteen percent of the 12,319 total teaching staff in the state.

In the spring of 1972 The Employee Benefits Questionnaire, an instrument developed by the authors to measure attitudes related to employee benefits, was sent to 266 teachers and 79.9 percent of the teachers responded. The respondents were found to be about 59% tenured, 34% male, and approximately equally divided between elementary and secondary teachers.

Results

The rank order of importance that the teachers placed on individual employee benefits is shown in Table 1.

Further analysis was completed to indicate if tenured teachers valued employee benefits differently than

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[2]The school districts are Truth or Consequences, Tularosa, Bloomfield, Aztec, Raton, Mountainair, Clayton, Mora, Lordsburg, Jojoaque, Santa Rosa, Reserve, Cloudcroft, Carrizozo, Loving, Texico, Hagerman, Tatum, Causey, House, Mosquero, Elida, Maxwell, Cuba, Chama, Encio, Grady, Corona, Quenmado, San Jon, Cimarron, Estanicia, Moriarty, Questa, Socorro, Magdalena, Springer, Fort Summer, Dulce, Ojo Calrente, Jimez Springs, Floyd, Tucumcari, Vaughan, Melrose, Jimez Mountain, Logan, Lake Arthur, Capitan, Des Moines. Dora, Roy, Animas, Mondo, Wagon Mound, Dexter, Pecos, Ruidoso, Penasco, Eunice, Hatch, Jal

Table 1

Rank Order of Importance of Individual Employee Benefits by Teachers in Small Schools of New Mexico

Rank	Benefit
1	Freedom to determine teaching methods
2	Small student-teacher ratio
3	Accumulative sick leave
4	Retirement program
5	Teaching supplies
6	Participation in curriculum decisions
7	Daily preparation period
8	Salary schedule advancement credit for additional training
9	Freedom to discipline students
10	School library
11	Freedom to select texts and materials
12	Legal protection in court actions
13	Group health and accident insurance
14	Group major medical insurance
15	Modern teaching facilities
16	Latest teaching equipment (Hardware)
17	Latest teaching materials (Software)
18	Liability insurance
19	Personal leave days (with pay)
20	Tenure
21	Extra pay for extra teaching duties
22	Released time to attend professional meetings
23	Full pay while at professional meetings
24	Teacher aid assistance
25	Duty free lunch
26	Grievance procedure
27	Fewer non-teaching duties
28	Bereavement leave (with pay)
29	District-provided in-service training programs
30	Participation in administrative decisions
31	Group income protection insurance
32	Paid expenses for professional meetings
33	Faculty work room
34	Length of the work day
35	Workman's compensation insurance
36	Paid tuition for professional training
37	Group life insurance
38	Professional library for faculty
39	Faculty lounge
40	Severance pay
41	Sabbatical leave (with pay)
42	Secretarial assistance
43	Leave of absence (without pay)
44	Salary schedule advancement credit for travel
45	Leave for jury duty (with pay)
46	Group dental insurance
47	Maturnity leave (without pay)
48	Tax sheltered annuity program
49	Opportunity to teach summer school
50	Military training leave (without pay)
51	Faculty dining room

non-tenured teachers. Of the fifty one items, only eleven were ranked three or more rankings apart. These items and their ranks are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Rank Order of Importance of Individual Employee Benefits by Tenured and Non-Tenured Teachers (Selected Items)

Rank Tenured	Rank Non-Tenured	Item
1	4	Retirement program
4	1	Small student-teacher ratio
11	6	Freedom to discipline students
18	25	Tenure
24	19	Extra pay for extra duty
25	30	Fewer non-teaching duties
29	23	Teacher aid assistance
30	37	Group life insurance
32	36	Length of work day
37	26	Paid tuition for professional training
39	43	Sabbatical leave with pay

Another area of some concern was Employee Benefits Preference. It was questioned if those who taught in grades kindergarten through six differed in their Employee Benefits Preference, from those teachers in grades seven through twelve. Again of the fifty-one items only eleven were found to be three or more rankings apart. They are shown in Table 3.

Using the ranking difference of three or more, small apparent variations in choice were found between male and female teachers. However, unlike the previous two tables these differences were not found until the fourteenth item. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 3

Rank Order of Importance of Individual Employee Benefits by Elementary and Secondary Teachers (Selected Items)

Rank Elementary	Rank Secondary	Item
1	4	Small student-teacher ratio
5	1	Freedom to determine teaching methods
6	12	Freedom to discipline students
9	5	Daily preparation period
19	23	Tenure
21	27	Teacher aid assistance
27	32	District-provided in-service training
30	36	Faculty work room
33	37	Length of work day
36	31	Paid expenses for professional meetings
37	33	Paid tuition for professional meetings

Table 4

Rank Order of Importance of Individual Employee Benefits Between Male and Female Teachers (Selected Items)

Rank Male	Rank Female	Item
14	19	School library
19	24	Released time to attend professional meetings
23	19	Personal leave days (with pay)
24	28	Fewer non-teaching duties
27	33	Group income protection insurance
28	32	Participation in administrative decisions
29	37	Group life insurance
30	35	Paid expenses for professional meetings
32	27	Bereavement leave (with pay)
34	10	Leave for jury duty (with pay)
36	30	Faculty work room
37	31	Length of the working day
39	42	Sabbatical leave (with pay)

Discussion

We have shown the apparent valuing of Employee Benefits by teachers of small schools. We have further shown that differences which seem to exist between tenured and non-tenured, male and female, and elementary and secondary teachers are very small. The groups seem to be very homogeneous.

The results of this information will be of some value to those who are attempting to make decisions about fringe benefits for teachers in small school districts. The decisions of legislatures, school administrators and those representing classroom teachers should be made upon some rational information. This hopefully will be a part of such.